



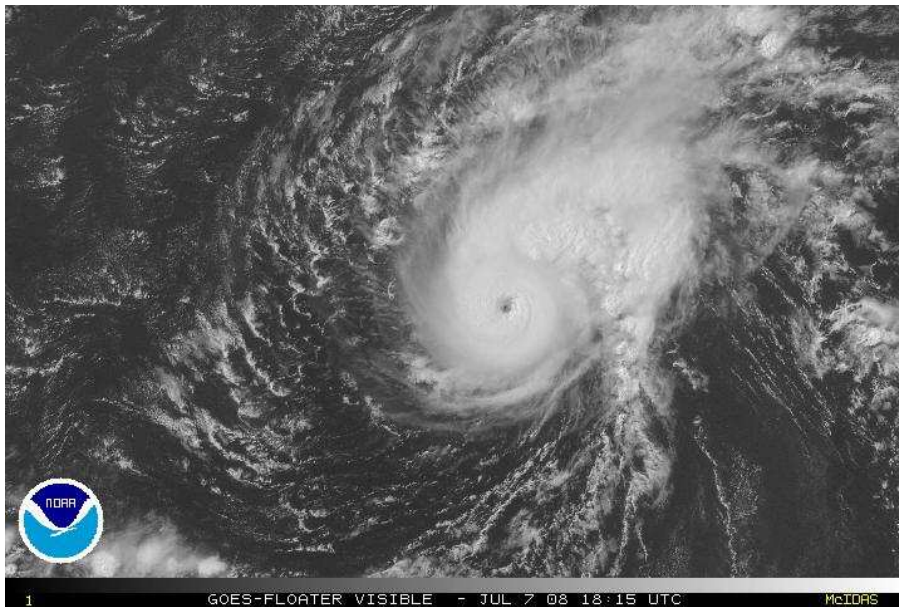
National Weather Service Tallahassee, Florida



In this edition of SkyWarn News:

- Hurricane Season Update
 - Graphical Hurricane Local Statement has arrived!
 - Significant Weather Alert Radio Alarms
 - Recent and Upcoming Spotter Classes
-

2008 Atlantic Hurricane Season is underway!



Hurricane Season has started across the Atlantic basin. While June and July are typically quiet months, the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season is already setting records. Bertha formed as tropical depression two on July 3rd from a tropical wave that moved off the coast of Africa. Bertha became a tropical storm later that afternoon and became a hurricane on July 7th.

Bertha began a process of rapid intensification later that day, becoming a major hurricane just twelve hours after attaining hurricane status. The image above is of Bertha as a major hurricane with winds of 115 mph. The 2008 version of Hurricane Bertha has already found its way into the record books. Bertha formed the furthest east of any named storm in the Atlantic prior to August 1st since 1950. (Remember, prior to this date, reliable data for storms in the far Eastern Atlantic was not available.) Bertha formed at 24.7°W, or about 3700 miles east of Miami, Florida. The previous record belonged to Tropical Storm Anna in 1969 that formed at 36.0°W, or about 2900 miles east of Miami. In terms of Bertha's intensity, Bertha is the sixth

SkyWarn News ---Page 2

strongest hurricane that has formed prior to August 1st, and is also the 3rd strongest to form so early in the year. You may recall Hurricanes Emily and Dennis from 2005. Emily and Dennis were the strongest major hurricanes to form prior to August 1st on record in the Atlantic.

While this impressive early season hurricane may imply that the remainder of the 2008 hurricane season will be very active, especially as August and September arrive, we should all remember that regardless of how active the hurricane season is, preparedness is key! If you haven't already done so, assemble your hurricane preparedness kit. Emergency management agencies in your state have suggestions on how you can best prepare yourself and your family for hurricanes. Check out these links below:

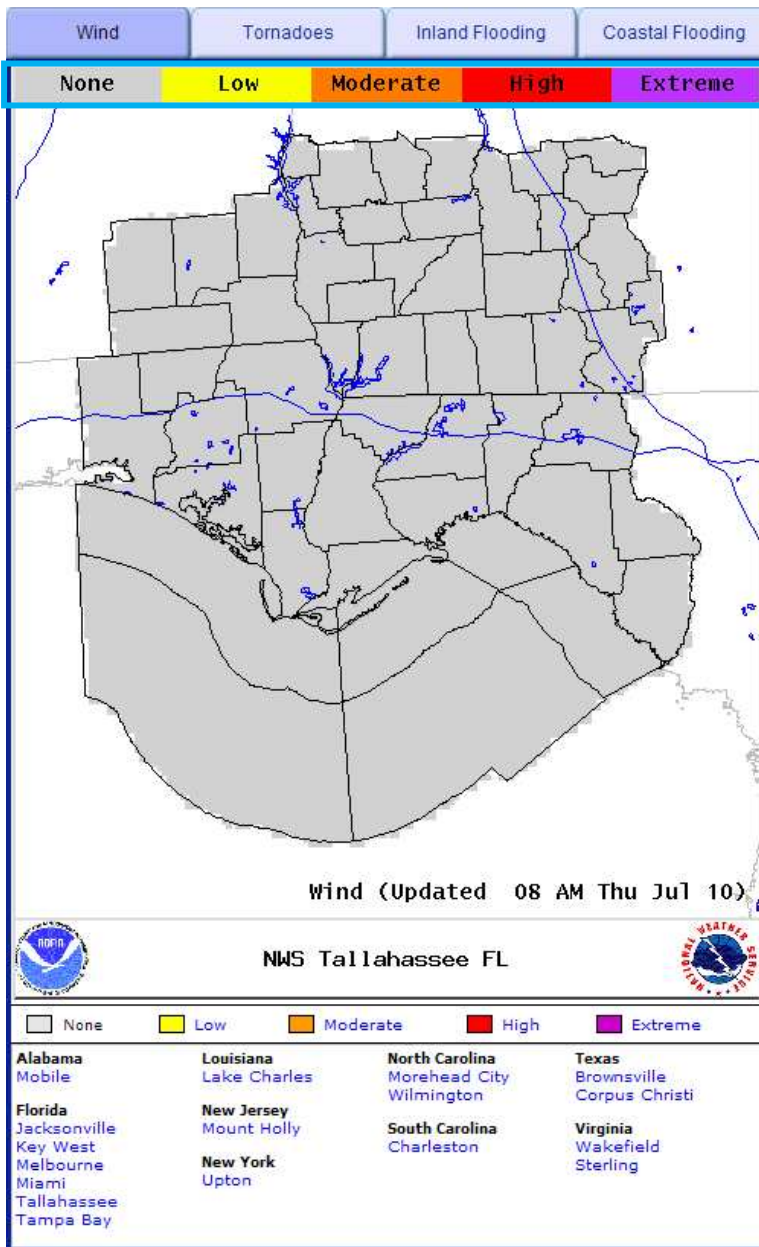
In Alabama: <http://www.hurricane.alabama.gov/>

In Georgia:

<http://www.gema.state.ga.us/ohsgemaweb.nsf/9C891F3A609DCA46852570C8005A2D64/4A9DF3188EB56F0B852571110049C8D7?OpenDocument>

In Florida: http://www.floridadisaster.org/family_plan.htm

The Graphical Hurricane Local Statement has arrived!



Whenever tropical systems are predicted to directly threaten the Tallahassee forecast area, and watches or warnings are in effect, our office will issue hurricane local statements. These hurricane local statements include important information on the approaching storm that explains the expected impacts of the tropical system.

Beginning with the 2008 Hurricane Season, our office will issue graphical hurricane local statements to complement the text version of this product. The image at left is a sample of the graphical hurricane local statement.

In the image at left, you will notice four tabs across the top: Wind, Tornadoes, Inland Flooding, and Coastal Flooding. On the website, each of these tabs correspond to an image that details the level of threat from that particular hazard. Our scale ranges from no impact to an extreme impact. By clicking on the color table across the top of the image (outlined in blue), a description of the associated impact for that level will appear.

These impact descriptions have been customized for our local area based on the hurricane climatology of our region. Therefore, if you look at other graphical hurricane local statements from neighboring offices, you may see slightly different descriptions. It is our hope that this graphical hurricane local statement will serve as another tool that is used to make the necessary preparations before a hurricane strikes. Remember, always listen to the advice of local emergency management. If they urge you to evacuate to a safer location, heed their advice!

You can access the Graphical Hurricane Local Statement at:
<http://www.weather.gov/os/tropical/intro.php?&key=TAE>

SkyWarn News ---Page 4

Significant Weather Alert Radio Alarms

For the past couple of years our office has alerted NOAA Weather Radio when a significant weather alert is issued for a county. A significant weather alert is issued for a thunderstorm that is considered to be strong (winds up to 55 mph and/or hail dime size or less) but remains below severe limits. Since many of the storms that develop during the summer time usually remain below severe limits (winds in excess of 57 mph and/or hail penny size or larger), our desire was to alert weather radio listeners to the approach of a strong thunderstorm that would be capable of minor damage.

Based on feedback received by our radio listeners, our office is planning to discontinue alerting these products on the weather radio. While the significant weather alert will still be issued and continue to play on the weather radio, there will be no alarm to set off the radio when these products are issued. Severe Thunderstorm and Tornado warnings will, of course, continue to alarm automatically on the radio.

We are interested in your input on this important topic. Please email us your response along with any other comments you may have to Kelly.Godsey@noaa.gov

Recent and Upcoming Spotter Courses

Two spotter courses were recently conducted across our region in the month of July. We would like to extend our appreciation to each of the following agencies:

Geneva County Emergency Management for sponsoring the spotter course in Southeast Alabama. There was a great turn out from the local community and we appreciate all those that participated.

The Albany Amateur Radio Club sponsored a spotter training session for South Central Georgia. Turn out at the event was great with an enjoyable evening had by all those in attendance.

If you have not attended a live spotter course and would be interested in attending, please check our course schedule on our website at:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tlh/severe/schedule.htm>

If you would like to schedule a course in your area, please contact Bob Goree at Bob.Goree@noaa.gov or by calling 850-942-8833.

For some of you, this may be the first time you have received this spotter newsletter. We hope you enjoy these newsletters and the information in them. We would also like to thank you for providing us with spotter reports when severe weather threatens and participating in our training sessions, whether that is in person or online.

Finally, for those of you interested in hurricanes, we invite you to download our latest tropical products guide from our website. You can find this new guide on our tropical watch page at the following address:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tlh/tropical/>

Then, look on the left hand side under the “useful links” section for the link to download this products guide.

Once again thank you for all your support for the National Weather Service mission!

-Kelly Godsey